



May 12, 2003
National Women's Check-Up Day

More Information About *Asthma*

Asthma is more than just a chronic disease of the lungs. If not managed carefully and treated right away, it could cause death. A person with asthma may suffer from a coughing, wheezing, a tight feeling in the chest, and trouble breathing. While asthma cannot be cured, it can be controlled. Women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant should also speak to their health care providers about the effects of asthma during pregnancy.

- ❖ Each year nearly 500,000 Americans are hospitalized and more than 5,000 die from asthma. Adult women are far more likely than men to have asthma, and are also more likely to be hospitalized and die from asthma. African Americans are also at a higher risk to be hospitalized for asthma and are more likely to die from asthma than other Americans.

What Causes Asthma?

Today, the causes of asthma are better understood. Both the genes people inherit and their environmental surroundings cause asthma. Many people with asthma have allergic reactions to particles breathed in through the air or allergens such as animal dander, waste products from dust mites and cockroaches, and pollen. Other common causes of asthma attacks include, mold, cigarette smoke, air pollution, exercise, stress, infections due to cold or flu, changes in weather, strong odors from painting or cooking, scented products, and even certain foods and medicines.

What to Do About Asthma...

Women who suffer from symptoms of asthma should talk to their health care provider. Follow these steps to control your asthma:

- ❖ Talk to your health care provider about treatments for asthma.
- ❖ Avoid things that will trigger your asthma, such as cold air, dust, mold, feathers, and cigarette smoke.
- ❖ Take your medicines as prescribed.
- ❖ If your asthma symptoms get worse, act quickly. Know which medicine to take and when to get help.

